OPINION

Jewish Settlements Are Not an Obstacle and They're Not Illegal

To imply that terrorism is a consequence of the settlements is to rewrite history and blame the Jews for being victims

By Abraham H. Miller • 01/03/17 3:30pm

A picture taken on January 3 shows Israeli construction cranes and excavators at a building site of new housing units in the Jewish settlement of Kochav Ya'akov near the West Bank city of Ramallah (top), adjacent to Qalandiya refugee camp. Ahmad Gharabli/AFP/Getty Images

Despite the U.N.'s non-binding resolutions and the fiction propagated by the Arab world, there is no such polity as the West Bank. In 1920, the post-World War I Allied Supreme Council held an international conference at San Remo, Italy, establishing the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, which

The San Remo conference's decision to create a League of Nations Mandate for the entity known as Palestine was confirmed by the League of Nations on July 24, 1922.

In accordance with the Balfour Declaration, the League resolved to create a Jewish nation in the Mandate. It is important to note that the Mandate included all of present-day Israel and Jordan, as well as Gaza, Judea and Samaria.

Britain was entrusted to provide for Jewish immigration to the Mandate and to act as temporary trustee until full Jewish sovereignty could be established.

Contrary to the principles adopted by the League of Nations, Britain arbitrarily and willfully transferred 76 percent of the Mandate to the Emir Abdullah, creating the emirate that became known as Transjordan, what is now modern Jordan.

To partially assuage the League of Nations, Britain claimed that it still held control of the Emirate of Transjordan. A subsequent League commission in 1932 declared that the British creation of

Mandate.

In May of 1939, yielding to Arab riots and unrest, the British government issued a White Paper that effectively denied Jewish immigration to the western portion of the Mandate. As Jews faced their darkest hours in Europe, the British government chose to renege on its obligations to both the Jewish people and the League of Nations. By 1947, faced with both Jewish and Arab insurgencies, Britain turned the Mandate issue back to the United Nations.

In 1947, the U.N. voted to partition the remaining 24 percent of the original Palestine Mandate between the Jewish and Arab communities. The Jews accepted the partition but the Arabs did not, and together with other Arab nations, invaded the fledgling Jewish state. The Jews ended up controlling the land apportioned to them by the U.N. and some pieces of Arab territory.

Many Arabs fled the war, some to get out of harm's way, and others who were induced by Arab propaganda. At the war's end, those Arabs who fled were not permitted to return, creating a Jewish majority in the land.

and cutting off the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, Israeli forces went to war against Egypt. Responding to Egyptian strongman Gamal Abdel Nasser's claim that Egypt was winning the war, Jordan's King Hussein entered the war against Israel.

Since 1948, Jordan had occupied the territory designated for an Arab state. Only Britain and Pakistan recognized this illegal annexation of land set aside by the U.N. partition for an Arab homeland. In 1967, Israeli forces retook the eastern section of Jerusalem that was supposed to have been part of an international city but from which Jordan prohibited Jews. The Wailing Wall and the Temple Mount, the two holiest sites in Judaism, were thus retaken not from Palestinians but from an illegal occupier, Jordan.

There never was a Palestinian state. Jordan occupied the areas of Judea and Samaria, and Egypt occupied Gaza.

Given that the territories seized in the '67 war were held illegally by Jordan and Egypt, these are disputed territories. Moreover, Israel upholds the legality of the League of Nations resolutions that crafted a Jewish homeland from the river

Mandate of Palestine survive the League of Nations, thus Israel has every right to settle anywhere from the river to the sea.

Indeed, Jews lived in the area known as the West Bank before 1947, but were expelled from or massacred in their towns and villages by the Arabs. The Israelis argue that Jews are returning to areas which they previously inhabited under League of Nations doctrine, and from which they were ethnically cleansed and murdered.

While all previous U.S. administrations thought the final border should be negotiated between the two sides, the Obama administration has worked behind the scenes to help the U.N. declare the settlements illegal and an obstacle to peace. Indeed, negotiating borders was a hallmark of the Oslo Accords.

But long before there were settlements there was communal violence against the Jews. Terrorism is nothing new, and to imply that terrorism is a consequence of the settlements is to rewrite history and blame the Jews for being victims.

Israel has shown a willingness to uproot settlements in the interest of peace. It

Clearly, Israel cannot uproot 400,000 to 500,000 settlers without precipitating civil war, which it almost did as a consequence of its policies in Gaza.

To date, no Palestinian-Arab government has been willing to accept a Palestinian state as long as it borders on a Jewish state. Nor has any Arab-Palestinian government been willing to prepare its population for acceptance of a Jewish state. Until those two things occur, the existence of settlements and debates over their legality will have nothing to do with the process of peace.

That is something President Obama and his secretary of state refuse to admit.

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